

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 182973 TOSEC 080294

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MARR, IR, EG

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM - PROPOSAL FOR IRAN TO TRAIN
EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON AMERICAN-SUPPLIED AIRCRAFT
(S/S NO. 7515645)

FOR SAUNDERS FROM ATHERTON

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN ACTION MEMORANDUM FROM ME FOR THE
SECRETARY. I THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF YOU CAN GO OVER
IT WITH HERMANN IN BELGRADE BEFORE IT IS PROVIDED TO THE
SECRETARY. BY SEPTTEL WE ARE SENDING YOU A CABLE FROM THE
MAAG IN TEHRAN ON THE ORIGINAL IRANIAN APPROACH TO US ON
THIS SUBJECT. WE HAVE ALSO ARRANGED THAT SOME INTELLIGENCE
ON THIS SUBJECT BE CONVEYED TO YOU THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS.

THE PROBLEM

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THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMED US THAT PRESIDENT
SADAT HAS ASKED THE SHAH TO PROVIDE PROFICIENCY FLYING
HOURS FOR FORTY TO FIFTY EGYPTIAN PILOTS WHO, BECAUSE OF
LACK OF AIRCRAFT AVAILABILITY IN EGYPT (THE AIRCRAFT ARE

APPARENTLY GROUNDED DUE TO LACK OF SPARE PARTS), ARE FLYING ONLY TWO HOURS PER MONTH. THE TYPES OF PILOTS AND DURATION OF TRAINING WERE NOT SPECIFIED. THE IRANIAN GOVERN-

MENT HAS APPROACHED US THROUGH THE MAAG IN TEHRAN FOR OUR REACTION TO THIS TRAINING PROPOSAL. THE IRANIANS DID NOT SPECIFY THE AIRCRAFT UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT WE ASSUME THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FLYING TIME ON US-SUPPLIED F-4'S, F-5A/B'S AND F-5E'S, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY ALSO WANT TRAINING ON C-130'S.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

OVER THE PAST YEAR EGYPT AND IRAN HAVE BOTH WORKED TOWARDS A RAPPROCHEMENT, WITH VISITS BY THE SHAH AND SADAT TO EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY. WHILE NO MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS ARE KNOWN TO BE AGREED UPON, EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF WAR GAMASY ALSO RECENTLY VISITED IRAN, PROBABLY TO FURTHER REFLECT THE GROWING SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. WE DO NOT KNOW THE REAL MOTIVE FOR EGYPTIAN INTEREST IN THIS TRAINING. IT MIGHT BE ALL THEY WANT IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE THEIR PILOTS EXTRA FLYING TIME AS STATED IN THEIR REQUEST. THE F-5E HAS VERY SIMILAR FLYING CHARACTERISTICS TO MIG AIRCRAFT AND WOULD PROVIDE A RATIONAL COMPATIBILITY FOR FLIGHT TIME. (THE F-5E IS USED BY OUR AIR FORCE AS A SUBSTITUTE ENEMY AIRCRAFT FOR THE MIG IN TRAINING EXERCISES.) ON THE OTHER HAND, SADAT MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN TRAINING FOR HIS PILOTS FOR THE F-5 AIRCRAFT SO THAT THE OPTION WOULD BE OPEN FOR THESE PILOTS TO FLY THE F-5'S WE HAVE SOLD TO SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN, AS WELL AS THE C-130'S OWNED BY LIBYA. FINALLY, SADAT MIGHT BE HOPING TO FAMILIARIZE HIS PILOTS WITH OUR AIRCRAFT (ESPECIALLY THE F-4) SO THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CAPABILITIES, CHARACTERISTICS, AS WELL AS THE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT OF THE ISRAELI AIRCRAFT THEY MIGHT SOME DAY MEET IN COMBAT.

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FROM A LEGAL STANDPOINT, OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH IRAN DOES NOT EXPRESSLY PRECLUDE THE GOI FROM TRAINING THIRD-COUNTRY OFFICERS ON US-SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT. THE AGREEMENT MERELY SPECIFIES USE CONSISTENT WITH THE UN CHARTER AND U.S. LEGISLATION. ACCORDINGLY, THE GOI WOULD NOT NEED OUR PERMISSION TO PROVIDE TRAINING FOR A FRIENDLY NEIGHBORING COUNTRY UNDER MOST CIRCUMSTANCES. TRAINING ON THE F-4, HOWEVER, WOULD INVOLVE RELEASE OF CLASSIFIED DATA, TO WHICH OUR AGREEMENT WOULD BE NEEDED. WITH REGARD TO TRAINING ON THE F-5, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT WOULD NOT REQUIRE RELEASE OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION; TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, HOWEVER, THE IRANIANS WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER EVERY ASPECT OF

THE TRAINING - INCLUDING THE AIRCRAFT, WEAPONS SYSTEMS, ELECTRONIC GEAR, AIR BASES, AND TRAINING MANUALS USED - TO BE SURE THEY WERE NOT VIOLATING U.S. NATIONAL DISCLOSURE POLICY.

FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL STANDPOINT, SUCH TRAINING COULD CAUSE MAJOR PROBLEMS ON SUPPORT FOR OUR AID PROGRAMS FOR EGYPT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME FUTURE MILITARY SALES. IT COULD ALSO LEAD TO EFFORTS TO INSTITUTE CONGRESSIONAL LIMITATIONS ON OUR MILITARY PROGRAMS WITH IRAN. CURRENT LEGISLATION PROHIBITS TRANSFERS OF EQUIPMENT WITHOUT USG CONSENT AND PROHIBITS SUCH CONSENT UNLESS THE USG WOULD ITSELF TRANSFER THE ARTICLE DIRECTLY TO THE THIRD PARTY. A CONTROVERSIAL CASE LIKE THIS ONE COULD PROMPT LEGISLATION EXTENDING THESE SAME LIMITATIONS TO TRANSFERS OF SERVICES.

ISRAELI REACTION TO ANY MEASURES INVOLVING U.S. AGREEMENT TO INCREASE THE COMBAT READINESS OF THE CONFRONTATION STATES WOULD PREDICTABLY BE SHARPLY NEGATIVE. THE ISRAELIS WOULD VIEW OUR ACQUIESCENCE IN THIS TRAINING ENTERPRISE AS EVIDENCE OF DISREGARD FOR THEIR SECURITY CONCERNS AND AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO A REASONABLY FRIENDLY STATE--IRAN--TO BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPLICATED IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION. THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE CASE OF TRAINING EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON THE F-4 AND C-130, AIRCRAFT IN THE ISRAELI INVENTORY. THE ISRAELIS COULD ARGUE THAT ACCESS TO THESE AIRCRAFT COMPROMISES THEIR PERFORMANCE AND

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ELECTRONIC CHARACTERISTICS AND THEREFORE GOES BEYOND TRAINING.

AN INDEX TO ISRAELI INTEREST IS THE FACT THAT MINISTER SHALEV HAS RAISED THE ISSUE OF IRANIAN TRAINING OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS TWICE WITH ME. HE SAID ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE INDICATED THAT SUCH TRAINING--UNSPECIFIED AS TO TYPE--HAD ALREADY BEGUN, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS LAST MARCH. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THIS IS TRUE--APART FROM IRANIAN TRAINING, WITH OUR KNOWLEDGE, OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS TO FLY THE HELICOPTER PRESIDENT NIXON GAVE TO SADAT.

IF WE TELL THE IRANIANS WE ARE AGAINST THE TRAINING, WE DO NOT THINK IT WOULD CAUSE IRREPARABLE DIFFICULTY WITH THE SHAH. SADAT WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED, BUT CONVINCING ARGUMENTS CAN BE MADE TO SUPPORT SUCH A POSITION. WITH SADAT, WE CAN EXPLAIN THAT THE CONTROVERSY OVER THIS TRAINING COULD POTENTIALLY DAMAGE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ESTABLISHING SOME TYPE OF FUTURE MILITARY SALES RELATIONSHIP AND COULD UNDERCUT THE SUPPORT YOU AND THE PRESIDENT NEED ON THE HILL FOR YOUR PEACEMAKING EFFORTS. WITH THE

SHAH, WE CAN EXPLAIN THE DIFFICULTIES THIS CONTROVERSIAL TRAINING MIGHT CAUSE FOR THE PEACEMAKING NEGOTIATIONS AS THEY REACH A SENSITIVE STAGE, AS WELL AS THE PROBLEMS IT WOULD BE LIKELY TO CAUSE IN CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR

IRANIAN PROGRAMS. ON THE OTHER HAND, APPROVAL OF SUCH TRAINING WOULD BE CONCRETE EVIDENCE TO SADAT THAT OUR RELATIONS HAVE ENTERED AN EVEN CLOSER STAGE. IN STRENGTHENING IRAN'S TIES WITH EGYPT, IT WOULD BE OF POSITIVE LONGER-TERM SIGNIFICANCE TO OUR OBJECTIVES IN THE AREA.

ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, WE THINK THE DIFFICULTIES OF NEGATIVE ISRAELI AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION, AND THE RESULTANT DAMAGE TO OUR NEGOTIATING POSTURE AND PROBABLY ALSO ON OVERALL U.S.-IRANIAN RELATIONS IN THE LONGER TERM, ARGUE STRONGLY AGAINST APPROVAL OF TRAINING EVEN ON THE LESS CONTROVERSIAL AIRCRAFT. WE BELIEVE THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE THIS QUERY IS TO RESPOND AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL RATHER THAN AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL SO THAT THERE ARE NO

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MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

SHOULD THE EGYPTIANS REQUEST SIMILAR TRAINING FROM OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE U.S.-SUPPLIED AIRCRAFT, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE SAME APPROACH BE TAKEN.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT WE NOT AGREE TO TRAINING OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON ANY AMERICAN-SUPPLIED IRANIAN AIRCRAFT.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

THAT YOU APPROVE FOR TRANSMISSION BY THE DEPARTMENT THE ATTACHED TELEGRAMS TO TEHRAN AND CAIRO CONTAINING A PERSONAL LETTER FROM YOU FOR THE SHAH AND AN INSTRUCTION TO ELITS TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH SADAT.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ATTACHMENTS

1. CABLE TO TEHRAN
2. CABLE TO CAIRO

CLEARANCES: PM/SAS:DJAMES L/PM:JMICH

ATTACHMENT 1 - INSTRUCTION TO TEHRAN

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ME TO THE SHAH.

BEGIN TEXT. YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY: PRESIDENT SADAT'S
REQUEST TO YOU TO PROVIDE FLYING TIME FOR EGYPTIAN PILOTS

IN IRAN WAS BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION BY GENERAL KHATAMI
THROUGH NORMAL MILITARY CHANNELS. IN VIEW OF THE IMPOR-
TANCE OF THIS MATTER, I BELIEVE IT DESIRABLE TO SHARE MY
THOUGHTS DIRECTLY WITH YOU SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO INAD-
VERTENT MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

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IN OUR CONVERSATIONS OVER THE LAST YEAR, WE HAVE AGREED
THAT PROGRESS TOWARD A LASTING SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE
EAST IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO BOTH OF OUR COUNTRIES--
INDEED TO THE ENTIRE WORLD--AND THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS
SHOWN GREAT WISDOM AND COURAGE IN HIS APPROACH TO THE
ISSUES INVOLVED. IN THE PERIOD SINCE I LAST MET WITH YOU
IN MAY IN WASHINGTON, I HAVE CONTINUED TO BE MOST ENCOUR-
AGED BY PRESIDENT SADAT'S EVIDENT DESIRE TO STEER A
PEACEFUL AND PRAGMATIC COURSE. WE ARE NOW APPROACHING A
CRITICAL PHASE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE NEXT STEP IN THE
SINAI AND, FRANKLY, I AM NOT YET CERTAIN WE SHALL BE suc-
cessful. HOWEVER, EVEN IF OUR CURRENT EFFORTS DO FIND
ACCEPTANCE BY THE PARTIES, MANY MORE EXTRAORDINARILY
DIFFICULT HURDLES LIE AHEAD IN THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS.

IN THIS PERIOD IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT--INDEED, CRUCIAL--
FOR ALL OF US TO DO OUR UTMOST TO AVOID ANYTHING THAT
COULD FURTHER COMPLICATE THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS. MY
CONCERN IS THAT THE TRAINING OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON AMERI-
CAN AIRCRAFT WOULD BECOME A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE IN THIS
COUNTRY AND UNDERMINE THE SUPPORT IN CONGRESS BOTH FOR
OUR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND FOR OUR
PROGRAMS OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT.

AS YOU KNOW WELL, YOUR MAJESTY, WE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE
THE STEPS YOU HAVE TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN IRAN'S TIES WITH
EGYPT AND HAVE BEEN VERY APPRECIATIVE OF YOUR SUPPORT FOR
OUR OWN EFFORTS. A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP AMONG YOU,
PRESIDENT SADAT, AND A FEW OF THE OTHER RESPONSIBLE LEADERS
IN THE AREA IS OF KEY LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE IF OUR MUTUAL
OBJECTIVES ARE TO BE REALIZED. IT IS WITH REGRET, THERE-
FORE, YOUR MAJESTY, THAT WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT TRAINING
AT THIS TIME BY IRAN, SUCH AS EGYPT HAS PROPOSED, IS UN-
DESIRABLE. AT A LATER DATE, OUR VIEWS ON THIS MATTER
COULD CHANGE.

IN ADDITION, YOUR MAJESTY, I WOULD BE LESS THAN CANDID IF
I DID NOT CONFIDE THAT A TRAINING PROGRAM BY IRAN ON BE-

HALF OF EGYPT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE SEVERELY CRITICIZED IN
IMPORTANT CONGRESSIONAL CIRCLES. I WOULD BE DEEPLY CON-
CERNED THAT IT MIGHT HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR OWN

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CURRENT PROGRAMS OF COOPERATION WITH IRAN. OUR ARMS
SUPPLY POLICY IN THE AREA, AS YOU WELL KNOW, HAS COME

UNDER ATTACK BUT SO FAR THE MORE EXTREME CRITICS HAVE NOT
HAD THEIR WAY FOR YOU HAVE STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL SUPPOR-
TERS. THIS SITUATION COULD BE UPSET BY THIS TRAINING
PROGRAM.

YOUR MAJESTY, IN LIGHT OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND THE VERY HIGH ESTEEM I HOLD FOR YOU,
I HAVE BEEN VERY FRANK IN SETTING FORTH MY VIEWS AND MY
CONCERNS. I AM CONFIDENT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND OUR POSI-
TION. I WILL BE ASKING AMBASSADOR EILTS TO DISCUSS THIS
MATTER WITH PRESIDENT SADAT TO LET HIM KNOW OUR VIEWS.
WITH WARM REGARDS, HENRY A. KISSINGER. END TEXT.

ATTACHMENT 2 - INSTRUCTION TO CAIRO

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR IRAN TO TRAIN EGYPTIAN PILOTS ON
AMERICAN-SUPPLIED AIRCRAFT

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE ACTION MEMORANDUM SENT TO ME FROM
ATHERTON ON THIS SUBJECT. I HAVE APPROVED THE RECOMMENDA-
TIONS IN THAT MEMORANDUM. RATHER THAN SENDING A PERSONAL
MESSAGE FROM ME TO SADAT, I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR DISCUS-
SING THIS PROBLEM WITH HIM ALONG THE LINES OF THE ACTION
MEMORANDUM, EXPLAINING OUR CONCERN THAT SUCH TRAINING
COULD STIR UP DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY HERE WHICH WOULD UNDER-
MINE SUPPORT FOR OUR PEACE EFFORTS AND DAMAGE FUTURE POS-
SIBILITIES FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT AS
WELL AS THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EVENTUALLY ESTABLISHING SOME
TYPE OF MILITARY SALES RELATIONSHIP BECAUSE OF NEGATIVE
CONGRESSIONAL REACTIONS.

YOU SHOULD ALSO NOTE THAT IF CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA OR
WITH CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES CHANGE, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE
TO AGREE TO SUCH TRAINING AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE. INGERSOLL

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